

Transport for London

Stansted G2 Rail Schemes Consultation Response 30 July 2007

Stansted Generation 2 Rail Schemes Enquiry: Transport for London's response

This response to the consultation paper on rail schemes associated with Stansted Generation 2, dated 6th June 2007 has been prepared by TfL and reflects the views of both the Greater London Authority and Transport for London.

TfL notes that BAA is undertaking preliminary rail schemes consultation prior to launching a Transport and Works enquiry in late 2007 for a second runway at Stansted. TfL's response is based on TfL's Rail 2025 proposals, its Eastern Rail Corridor Plan and Network Rail's draft Greater Anglia RUS.

In the Mayor's submission to the recent Examination in Public on the further alterations to the London Plan, he withdrew explicit support for any runway expansion for London. Nonetheless, the Mayor will work with strategic partners to improve and expand access to airports by public transport (London Plan Policy 3C.5). As such, TfL supports an improved public transport provision from London to the airport within the context of a holistic development of services on the line.

TfL recognises that Stansted airport is an important regional destination and that a significant proportion of airport employees and passengers live along this rail route. Indeed it is noted that whilst a relatively small percentage of airport employees live in the north-east quadrant of London at present, this may well grow during the development phases of the airport.

The Lower and Upper Lee Valley is a key target area for regeneration. The ribbon of land between Stratford and Cheshunt includes large areas of former industrial and market garden sites, poor housing and social exclusion. Whilst enjoying good access to rail, it is currently poorly served by rail services with priority given to non stopping longer distance trains.

The BAA consultation document sets out a number of infrastructure options for enhancing Stansted airport service capacity but TfL understands that the determination, funding and delivery of any associated railway infrastructure work along the Lee Valley will be made solely by the DfT.

TfL does not support BAA's current rail access proposals and associated infrastructure enhancement plans as a whole solution to the route's requirements for the next fifteen years and beyond.

We believe, however, that practical and affordable alternative schemes exist which meet the strategic aspirations and present requirements of all the above parties.

Service patterns and infrastructure requirements

The consultation paper implies that new infrastructure would be provided for 2 extra trains to run during the peak hour and to allow the Stansted Express trains to be dedicated for airport traffic. Whilst TfL understands that BAA's primary objective is in the provision of capacity for airport passengers, TfL believes that any additional publicly funded railway infrastructure should meet the needs of all forecast users of the route, local, outer suburban and airport passengers.

TfL seeks to provide a good service for all passengers travelling to from and within the GLA boundary. TfL believes that high priority should be given to providing an improved level of service to the intermediate stations between Tottenham Hale and Cheshunt. This corridor is a particularly important development area within the Government's Sustainable Communities plan, for TfL and for the GLA, and the provision of a far better rail service than today is a core element of delivering that development.

TfL believes that it would be unacceptable to invest in improving rail access to Stansted Airport without first enhancing the current basic hourly local rail service to socially-excluded areas on the same route such as Northumberland Park and Angel Road. Any investment in rail infrastructure must take account of the growth and needs of all categories of traffic on the route.

Dedicated tracks for fast airport services are inappropriate for this congested route. Such services would otherwise be provided to the detriment of frequency or crowding levels on other services.

Access to this route will be determined by the Office of Rail Regulation which promotes the interests of all users of railway services, the use of the railway network for the carriage of both passengers and goods and competition on railway services. ORR would likely challenge the dedicated use of part of the network by one train operator where there are competing, valid, demands for such capacity by other services.

In the allocation of contracted capacity, Network Rail has to pay due regard to the Decision Criteria under the Network Code which, amongst other matters, requires the efficient use of capacity. Taking into account all these considerations, TfL believes that the parties should together examine the merits of a holistic solution, designing the infrastructure to allow the network to be capable of meeting the varied demands of traffic on this route.

TfL's analysis indicates that four-tracking is required for most of the route between Copper Mill junction and Cheshunt, possibly going northwards to Broxbourne. This is in line with Network Rail's Greater Anglia Route Utilisation

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Strategy document, for which consultation closed in mid-July. Option 12 (b) in the RUS was developed by Network Rail and included four-tracking from Coppermill Junction to Broxbourne junction, with grade separation at the southern end. This option provides a positive Benefit to Cost Ratio of 4.2:1.

BAA's proposed three track rail access scheme does not cater for all projected growth and demand over the next 20 + years, would not represent value for money and would cause extensive and repeated disruption to passengers during its construction and subsequent essential enhancement to 4 tracking.

TfL believes that the development of the track and signalling infrastructure enhancement on the West Anglia Main Line should be phased on an incremental basis – without the substantial abortive expenditure created by stand alone enhancements.

TfL is concerned that BAA's proposals are not compatible with future 4-tracking of the route. The proposed alignments appear very tight to Network Rail boundaries and at this stage of development there must be a high risk of requiring significant compulsory land acquisition. There is a collective view that a four track railway will be required to meet the forecast growth before 2025 and therefore there will be pressure to safeguard land now. This may require a separate TWA order.

The signalling scheme for a 3-track interim layout would result in significant abortive expenditure, and Network Rail's limited signalling design resources would be better employed to undertake the signalling design and implementation once. There would almost certainly be less abortive cost if progressive sections of four tracking were constructed rather than 3 tracking on a separate alignment.

We look forward to continuing our discussion with BAA, Network Rail and the DfT in order to secure a railway for all present and future users of this route.

Peter Field
for Transport for London

31 July 2007